REMARKS

Claims 1-13 have been cancelled and new claims 14- 24 have been added. A Replacement Sheet is provided for Figure 2. No new matter is presented by virtue of the within amendments; support therefore can be found throughout the specification and in the original claims of the application. For instance, support for new claim 14 appears in original claims 1, 4 and 5; support for new claim 19 appears in original claims 1, 2, 4 and 8; support for new claim 20 appears in original claims 1, 2 and 9; support for new claim 24 appears in original claims 1, 10 and 13.

Referring now to the Office Action, Figure 2 was objected to for lack of a legend designating the subject matter thereof "Prior Art". Accordingly, Applicants submit herewith a Replacement Sheet for Figure 2 to which an appropriate legend has been added. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore requested.

The specification also was objected for its use of the term "load section". In particular, the Office Action requests clarification as to the meaning of the "load section" of a transistor. Applicants offer the following explanation, which is believed to obviate the objection. The term "load section", recited throughout the specification and claims, refers to that section of a transistor where a load may be applied or via which a significant current may flow, i.e. the source-drain section of a MOS transistor or the emitter-collector section of a bipolar transistor. In view thereof, withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Office Action goes on to state several terms appearing in the noted claims which allegedly render the subject matter thereof indefinite or otherwise misdescriptive.

At the outset, it is noted that the subject matter of original claims 1-13 has been rewritten

in new claims 14-24, in order to further define and clarify the essential features of the invention. It is believed that the within amendments and related explanation below address each informality requiring clarification.

For instance, as discussed above, Applicants have clarified the meaning of the term "load section" as used in the claims. Additionally, new claim 14 further defines and clarifies subject matter formerly recited in original claims 1, 4 and 5. Attention also is directed the specification at page 13, last paragraph, where it is described that the control voltages actually increase if the at least one threshold value is exceeded by the voltage on the circuit node by an amount depending on the voltage on the circuit node.

Further, the phrase "switched in series" has been replaced with --connected in series--. Further still, each of the newly presented independent claims recites that the voltage is a predetermined voltage (corresponding to U_{10} in the embodiments of the invention).

New claim 14 clearly recites that the threshold value is preset with the help of at least one diode (see diodes D2 to D4 in Fig. 1). As explained in detail on page 13, third paragraph of the present application, the threshold is defined by the diode threshold voltages.

Referring with particularity to the rejection of claim 8, it is noted that the subject matter of that claim is presented in new claim 19. As recited therein, the electrical path comprises the load section of a transistor controlled by the enabling signal, i.e. the load section of a transistor, wherein the transistor is controlled by the enabling signal. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of new claim 19 is abundantly clear when read in view of the specification.

The Office Action also indicates that explanation is required as to when the inactive state transistor P2 is turned off, that this does not preclude its gate voltage being regulated (in a

turned-off state). As explained in detail at page 13, lines 6-18 of the present application, this control voltage or bias voltage is generated via the transistor P3, the diode D1 and the resistor R1.

Regarding the rejection of original claim 9, it should be noted that even if transistor P5 is turned off, no static currents flow from terminal U_{10} to ground. The reason being, on the one hand, that transistor P6 is turned off and, on the other hand, that the connections to transistor N2 are connections to the gate and to the well, respectively, so that no conductive path is formed between U_{10} and ground.

In view of the within amendments and the explanation/clarification provided above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §112, 2nd paragraph rejection are requested.

Claims 1-5 and 10-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Hung et al. (US Patent 6,018,257). As the Office Action is understood, the subject matter of original claims 6-9 is free of the prior art (which subject matter is now presented in new claims 19-20).

In any event, the rejection is traversed. The cited reference does not teach or suggest the driver circuit of the present invention in any manner sufficient to sustain the §102 rejection.

For instance, in contrast to the features recited in new independent claim 14, Hung et al. do not disclose an electrical path from the circuit node to the reference potential, which electrical path has at least one diode to preset the at least one threshold value. In particular, the electrical path cited with respect to original claim 5 (elements 512', 506' and 510') does not constitute a path from the circuit node (corresponding to OUTPUT in Hung et al.) to a reference voltage or potential, since no current will flow between gate connections and source/drain connections of MOS transistors in the alleged path of Hung et al.

Further, new independent claim 24 recites a well control feature. Hung et al. do not disclose such a feature. As the Hung et al. reference is understood, a fixed voltage of 5V is applied to the wells of transistors 102 and 202; this does not constitute a control. A control in the sense of the present invention involves a regulation of the voltage, which is described at page 14, last paragraph of the present application.

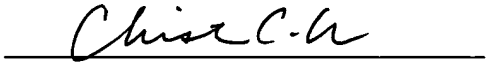
Accordingly, the rejection is properly withdrawn. For example, see *In re Marshall*, 198 USPQ 344, 346 (CCPA 1978) ("[r]ejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 are proper only when the claimed subject matter is identically disclosed or described in the prior art.")

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102 rejection are requested.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: August 30, 2004



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